CHAPTER 2: GIANTS WITH BEARDS AND FANGS

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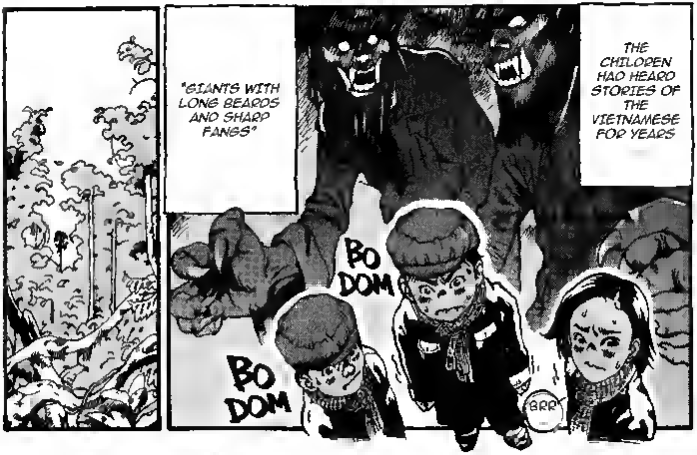
THE PARTY WAS THEIR ABSOLUTE GUIDE
THEY KNEW NO OTHER WAY OF LIVING

THE 1980S, CITY OF SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA
OUR WORST ENEMY
IS VIETNAM!

ITS ARMY HAS DESTROYED OUR COUNTRY
THEY CUT DOWN OUR TREES AND STEAL THEM FROM US!
IN THE NAME OF THE CAMBODIAN COMMUNIST PARTY, WE MUST FIGHT AND PUSH BACK THE INVADERS!!

BE ALWAYS ON YOUR GUARD!
THE ENEMY IS ALWAYS LURKING AROUND
WELL THEN
BACK TO YOUR SQUADS AND GET TO TRAINING
HEY YOU BRATS!

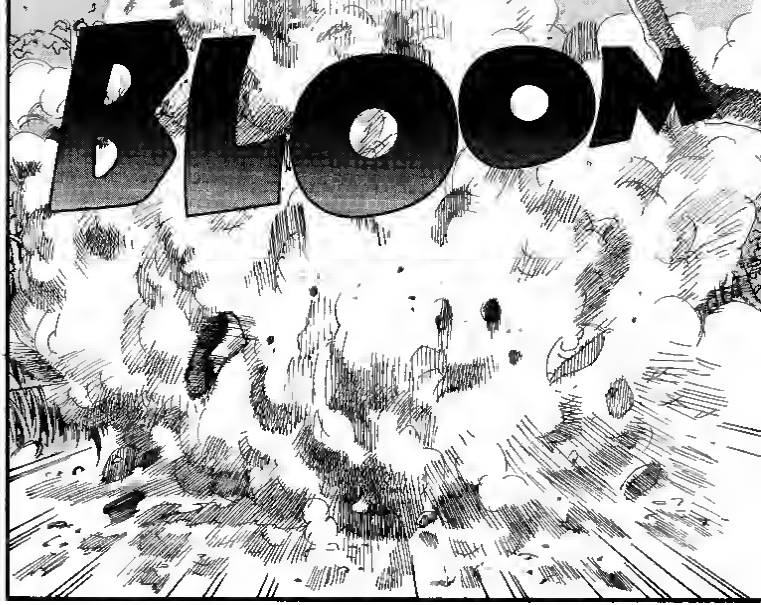
THE VIETNAMESE GIANTS ARE ALL OVER THE PLACE NOWADAYS
DON'T JUST HANG OUT, OTHERWISE YOU'RE TOAST!


"GIANTS WITH LONG BEARDS AND SHARP FANGS"
THE CHILDREN HAD HEARD STORIES OF THE VIETNAMESE FOR YEARS
BO DOM
BO DOM
BRR

AND ALL IT NEEDS NOW IS A LITTLE PRESSURE BEFORE IT GOES OFF
THIS IS HOW YOU TRIGGER THE DETONATOR
FLIP
CLIC

A PMN MADE IN USSR

THIS TYPE OF MINE ISN'T MADE TO KILL
ONLY THE LEGS?
AND BOTH, FOR A CHILD
IT'S CAPABLE OF RIPPING A HUMAN LEG OFF
THAT'S 3 LESS WE HAVE TO FIGHT!
AND IF THE WOUNDED IS CARRIED BY TWO OF HIS COMPADES
TAKING JUST ONE LEG IS ENOUGH TO KEEP A MAN FROM BATTLE
WOAAH!
MOVE BACK A BIT
I'LL SHOW YOU
QUIETLY!
...
IT'S MORE EFFECTIVE THAN JUST KILLING THEM, NO?
BOM
TAC
READY?


BLOOM

THAT'S WHAT A MINE DOES!
PLAF PLAF

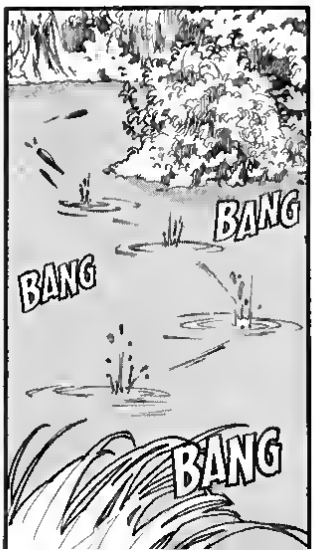
"ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE"
THE YOUNG AKI RA HAD NO IDEA HOW THIS DEMONIC WEAPON
WOULD INFLUENCE HIS LIFE

WE'RE GONNA SCOUT AHEAD
TRAIN WELL WHILE WE'RE GONE!
PER PER
...
AAHH
I'M SO HUN-GRY
MY HEAD'S SPIN-NING
BANG
BANG
BANG
THEIR MEALS WERE BASI-CALLY
LIMITED TO A SINGLE DISGUSTING PASTE, MADE FROM RICE
GROWL

HOW ABOUT WE GO TO THE RIVER TO SHOOT STUFF
BEFORE THEY COME BACK
HEY

WOAAH!

...
AH!
THE RIVER ?


BANG
BANG
BANG

BANG
BANG
SHH
SHH

LOOK, FISH!
OH!

PHEW
NOT EASY
AGAIN!
BLOOM
!!
PLOF
PLOF
PLOF
WO-AH!
BUT
UM

STILL PLAYING WITH THAT THING?
NANA!
HE HE!
THIS WAY I CAN SHOOT LAYING DOWN! IT'S MUCH EASIER!
COOL, ISN'T IT?
WOAH!
PUAF
FLOUP
YOU COULD'VE WARNED US!
FISH!
HUH?

OOH...
YADAH
HI THERE!
YA GET ALOT OF FISH?
WHAT'S WRONG?
HAND ME YOUR PLATES!
BLUP BLUP BLUP BLUP
THANKS!

I CAN TASTE IT ANYWAY!
BUT...
DID YOU GET FISH?
TAC
NO...
HA HA HA
...

NANA?
HELLO?
THIS ISN'T THE PATH WE CAME FROM
BUT...
UH OH
BO DOM

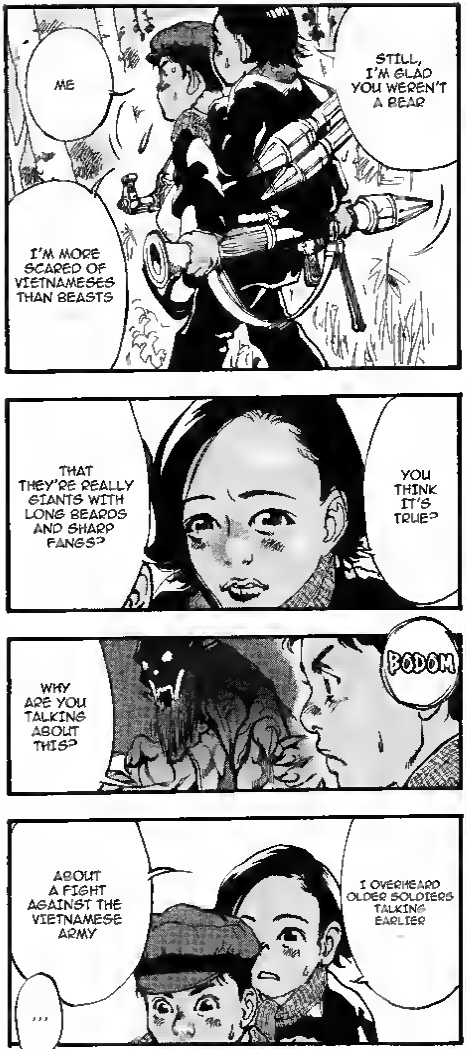
FRSH FRSH FRSH FRSH FRSH
OO-PS!
FAP

FRSH FRSH FRSH FRSH FRSH FRSH

THE ENEMY IS ALWAYS AROUND!
THE VIETNAMESE GIANTS ARE ALL OVER LATELY!

TAP
TA TA TAP
!
FOUGH
SOMETHING'S RUSTLING ROUND HERE!
BO DOM
WOAH!
BO DOM
ZAH
BO DOM
BO DOM
BO DOM
BO DOM
BO DOM

POF


I WAS HUNGRY... I THINK I PASSED OUT...
WHEN I CAME TO, EVERYONE WAS GONE AND I COULDN'T GET UP ON MY OWN...
OH...
I OVERHEARD OLDER SOLDIERS TALKING EARLIER...
ABOUT A FIGHT AGAINST THE VIETNAMESE ARMY
...
BODOM
WHY ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THIS?
YOU THINK IT'S TRUE?
THAT THEY'RE REALLY GIANTS WITH LONG BEARDS AND SHARP FANGS?
STILL, I'M GLAD YOU WEREN'T A BEAR
ME
I'M MORE SCARED OF VIETNAMESES THAN BEASTS

AND CAN SUCCESSFULLY GET INFORMATION FROM HIM ABOUT THE PARTY
WORD IS THEIR SOLDIERS CAN GO BACK HOME IF THEY CAPTURE ONE OF US
WE SEND A FEW SCOUTS TO PATROL AROUND THEIR POSITION
TO COUNTER THEIR MANEUVERS
...
IT RESULTS IN THEM TAKING RISKS TO CAPTURE US ALIVE
HIDDEN SOLDIERS AMBUSH THEM
AND WHEN THE VIETNAMESE GET CLOSE
TRUTH IS, I THINK THE VIETNAMESE ARE JUST LIKE US, AND NOT MONSTERS
DOESN'T IT SEEM ODD?
GIANT MONSTERS THAT WANT TO GO HOME AND GET EASILY AMBUSHED

THEN WHY ARE THEY ATTACKING US?
WHO WANT TO GO HOME?
THE VIETNAMESE NORMAL MEN?
WE MUST FIGHT AND PUSH BACK THE INVADERS!
WHO ACTUALLY WANTS TO BE AT WAR
GROWLING
...
!
NAW I'M OK
SORRY!
YOU'RE HUNGRY TOO AKI RA! LET ME DOWN!

POF
?
SHUSH!
WHAT'S WRONG?
HUH!?
FRR...
WAIT FOR ME HERE!
BANG!
BANG BANG
GULP!
ZOUP
AKI RA?
HELLO?

HE HE!
BUT..
HI!
!
NO!
SHOULD I COOK IT A LITTLE?
LET'S EAT IT THIS WAY
FIRE
MIGHT LEAD THE VIETNAMESE TO US
IS THAT RIGHT SO YOU ARE SCARED AFTERALL!
WELL..
YUM
YUM

BUT AT THE TIME, THE CAMBODIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA), IN PLACE UNDER POL POT'S REGIME, WAS CLOSE TO ITS END

WE CAN FINALLY GO HOME!

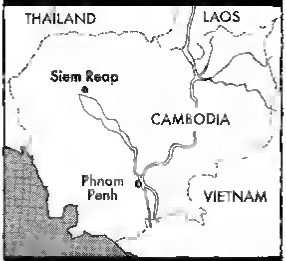
YES!

I'VE SEEN THIS TREE BEFORE

AKI PA AND HIS FRIENDS DIDN'T KNOW IT

AH!

SINCE THEN, POL POT'S PARTY WENT INTO HIDING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND THREW ITSELF IN A GUERILLA, COLLABORATING WITH ITS PREVIOUS ENEMIES, SIHANOUK* AND SON SAN**'S TROOPS. THE OBJECTIVE OF BOTH PARTIES WERE THE PRESERVATION OF THEIR COMMON INTERESTS



THE VIETNAMESE ARMY, UNDER THE PRETEXT OF "EMANCIPATION OF A POPULATION UNDER THE RULE OF TYRANNY", DECIDED TO INVADE CAMBODIA IN 1978. IN ONLY ONE MONTH, IT CONQUERED THE CAPITAL, PHNOM PENH

* PREVIOUS KING OF CAMBODIA ** PREVIOUS PRIME MINISTER UNDER LON NOL'S REGIME

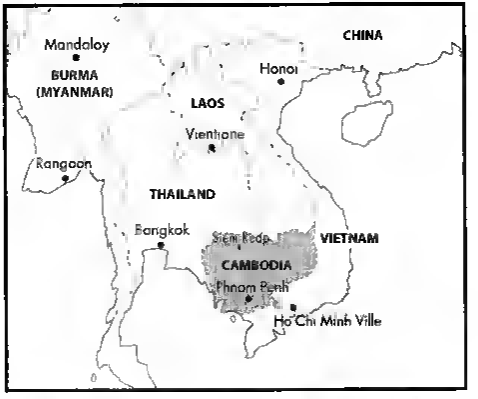
UNBELIEVABLE!

WOAAH!

AND SO ...

THEY'RE HERE!!
THE VIETNA-MESE ARMY!!
EVERY-BODY ATTACK!!
ATT-ACK!!
THEN, US TOO?
"EVERY-BODY"

THE STORY IS SET IN SIEM REAP, IN CAMBOOIA.
THE "AKIRA MINE MUSEUM" IS AROUND
FIVE KILOMETERS FROM THE ANGKOR VAT MONUMENTAL SITE.



Angkor Vat rises above a dense forest. Tourists come from all over the world to see it.

At the end of a dirt road you ll find the mine museum. At the entrance a huge sign

Cambodia, who has been through many civil wars, might not be a familiar country for Japanese. Nowadays, its political situation finally being stable numerous tourists roam the country to discover its historical monuments, such as Angkor Vat. Economically frail, the state depends on international aid, for medical facilities, education, infrastructures, etc. Many Japanese NGOs* bring it their support in various domains, so as to help the Cambodians reach their autonomy faster.

* Non-Governmental Organizations